

THE MORTAL

KWOP



EWING
CABAL
IACONO

MARVEL

4

LGY#790

RATED T+

**“FOR IT WAS PROMISED ME,
HE WHO CRAVES IT SHALL
OF THE FEAST PARTAKE.”**

**- FROM “THE SONG OF THE SUN,”
THE ELDER EDDAS OF SAEMUND SIGFUSSON**

In Asgard, time had also passed.

BY ODIN'S GRAY WHISKERS! A MIGHTY FEAT OF STRENGTH INDEED, YOUNG MAGNI!

There had been a funeral, in which a burning boat had been sent out upon the waters, though there was no body in Asgard's keeping to burn.

There had been a wake, where toasts were made and tales were told--and each toast and each tale broke each heart anew in each breast.

Asgard's king was dead...and now the Golden Realm had the hardest task ahead of it. To live on.

For if Thor had taught them one thing, it was that life must *always* go on. And so...after a time that seemed *eternal* even in the immortal lives of Gods...

...the Aesir learned to smile again.



BUT LET US INCREASE THE **WEIGHT** A LITTLE, SO YOU MAY PROVE YOURSELF **ANEW!**

THROW ME ANOTHER ROAST BOAR, FANDRAL!

DON'T THROW HIM ANOTHER ROAST BOAR, FANDRAL!



BAH! THE VOICE OF REASON THOU MAY BE, HILDEGARDE-- BUT THE LION OF ASGARD NEVER SAYS DIE... NOR DIET!

VOICE OF REASON? **ME?**

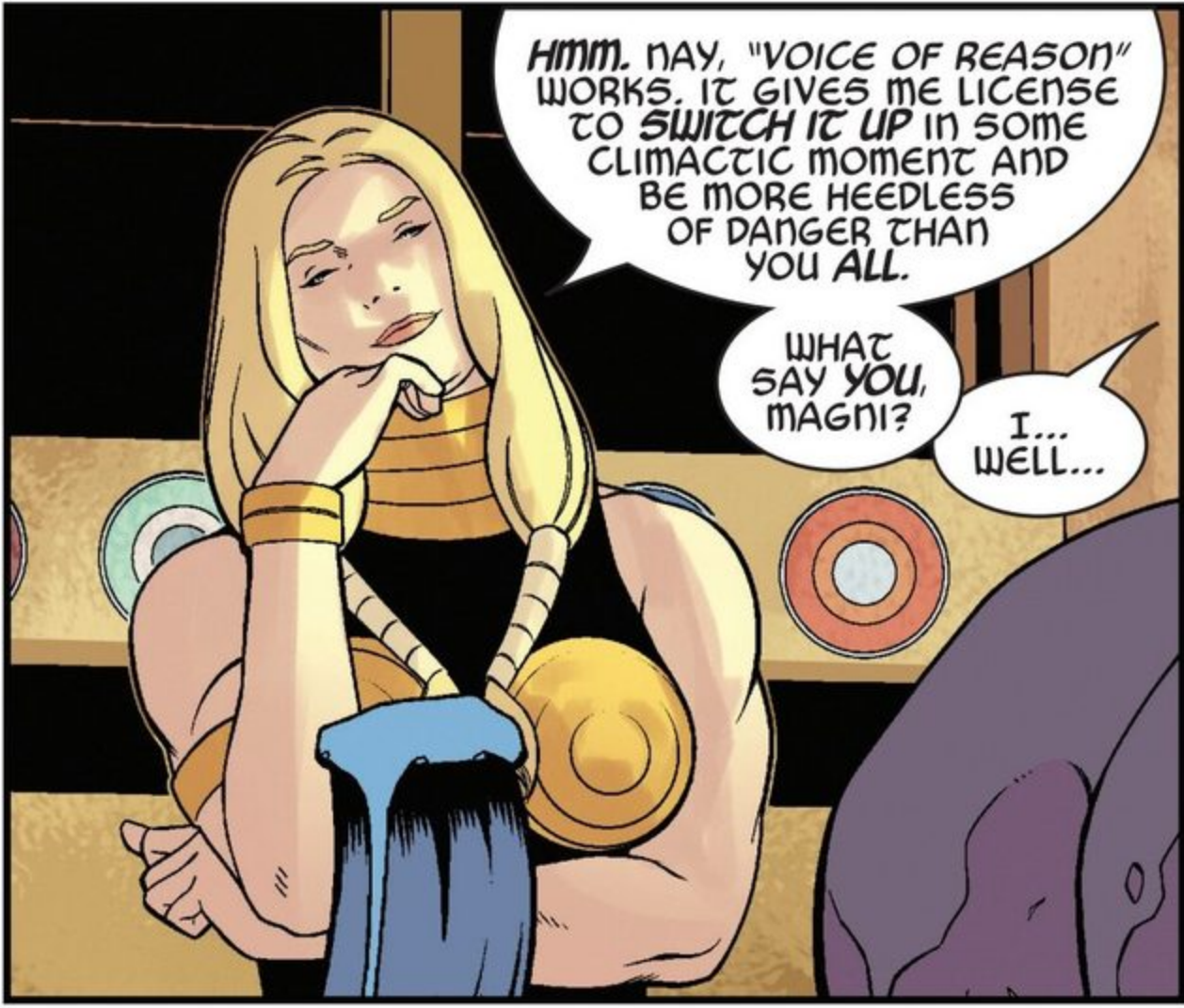
DEPRESSINGLY, I FEAR IT IS A **CLASSIC DYNAMIC.**

THE **FOURTH** OF A WACKY **FOURSOME** IS OFT THE **MODERATING INFLUENCE** TO THE **ANTICS** OF THE **OTHER THREE...**



THOU ART DESCRIBING A **ZEPPU, HOGUN!**

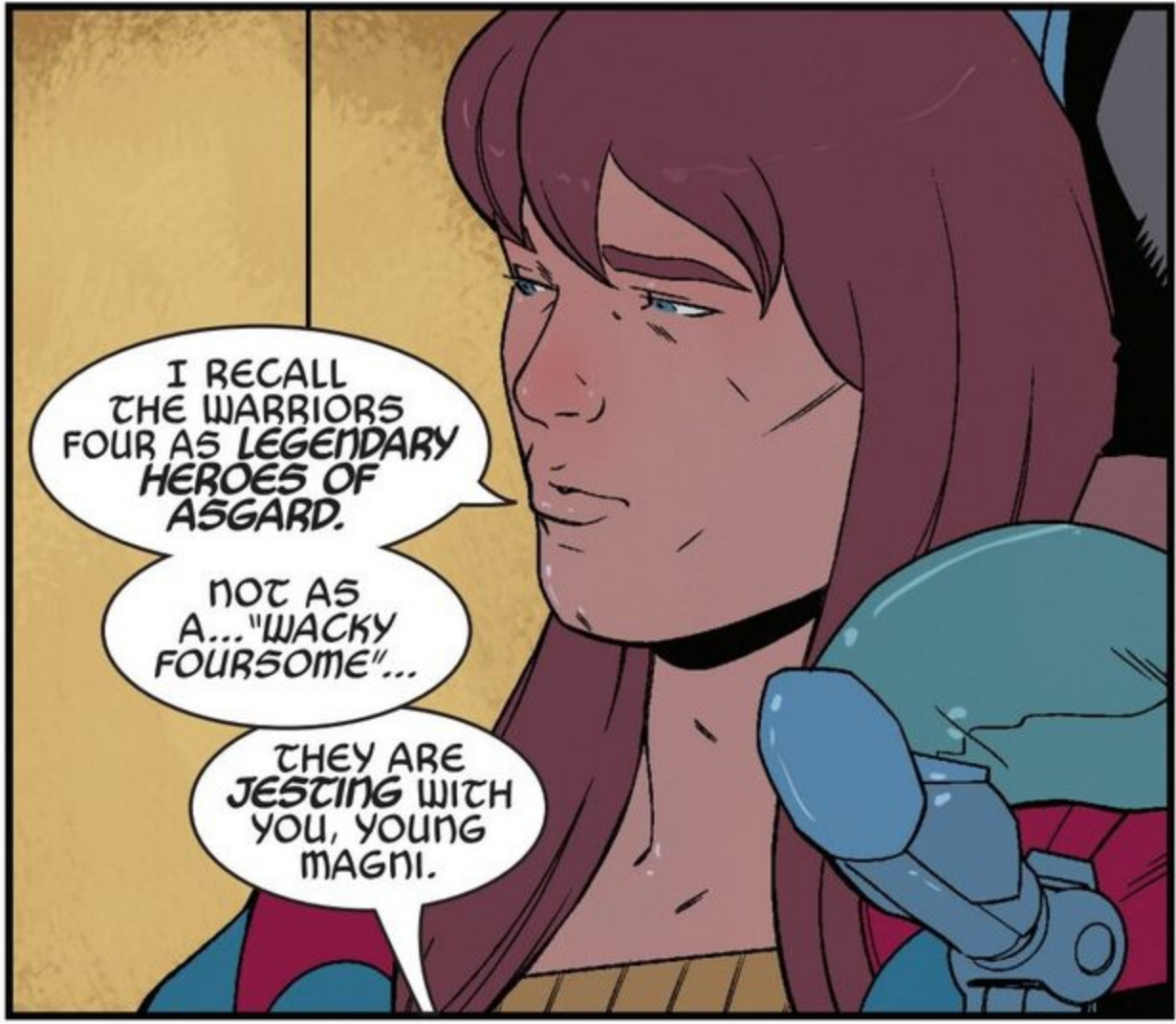
HAVE A CARE-- FOR **FANDRAL THE DASHING** SHALL NOT BROOK SUCH AN **INSULT** TO A **LADY!**



HMM. NAY, "VOICE OF REASON" WORKS. IT GIVES ME LICENSE TO **SWITCH IT UP** IN SOME CLIMACTIC MOMENT AND BE MORE **HEEDLESS** OF DANGER THAN YOU ALL.

WHAT SAY YOU, **MAGNI?**

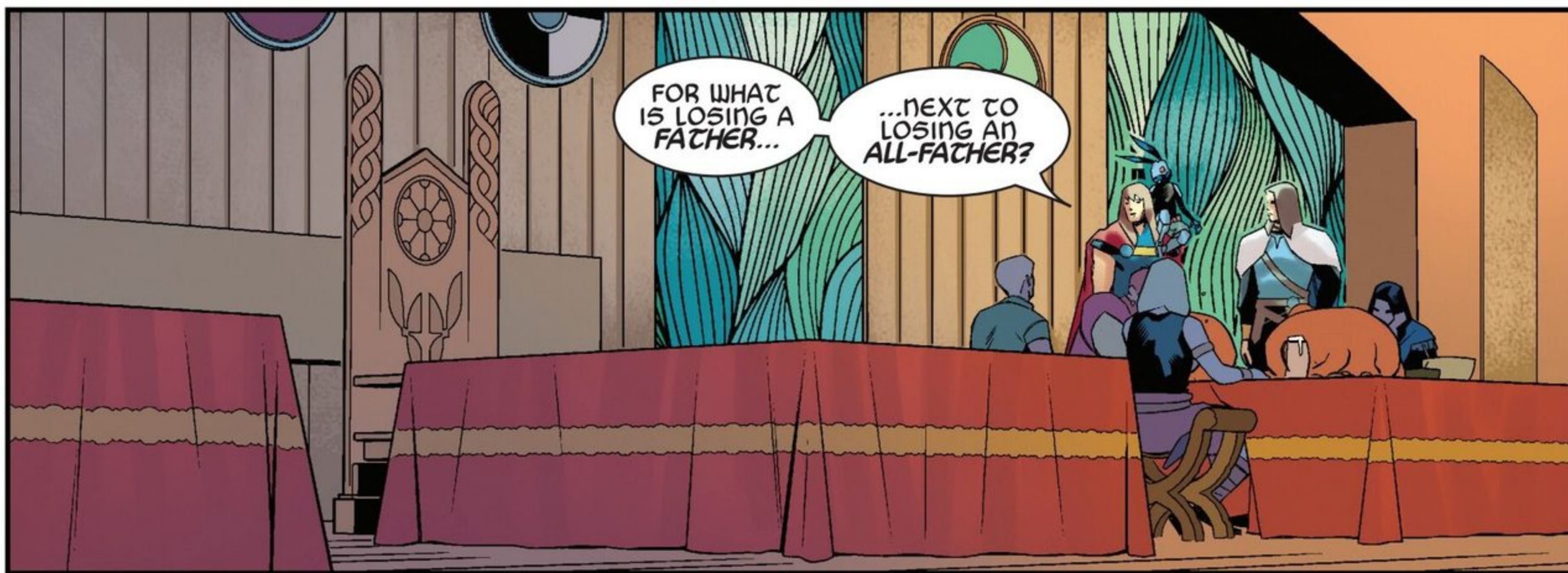
I... WELL...

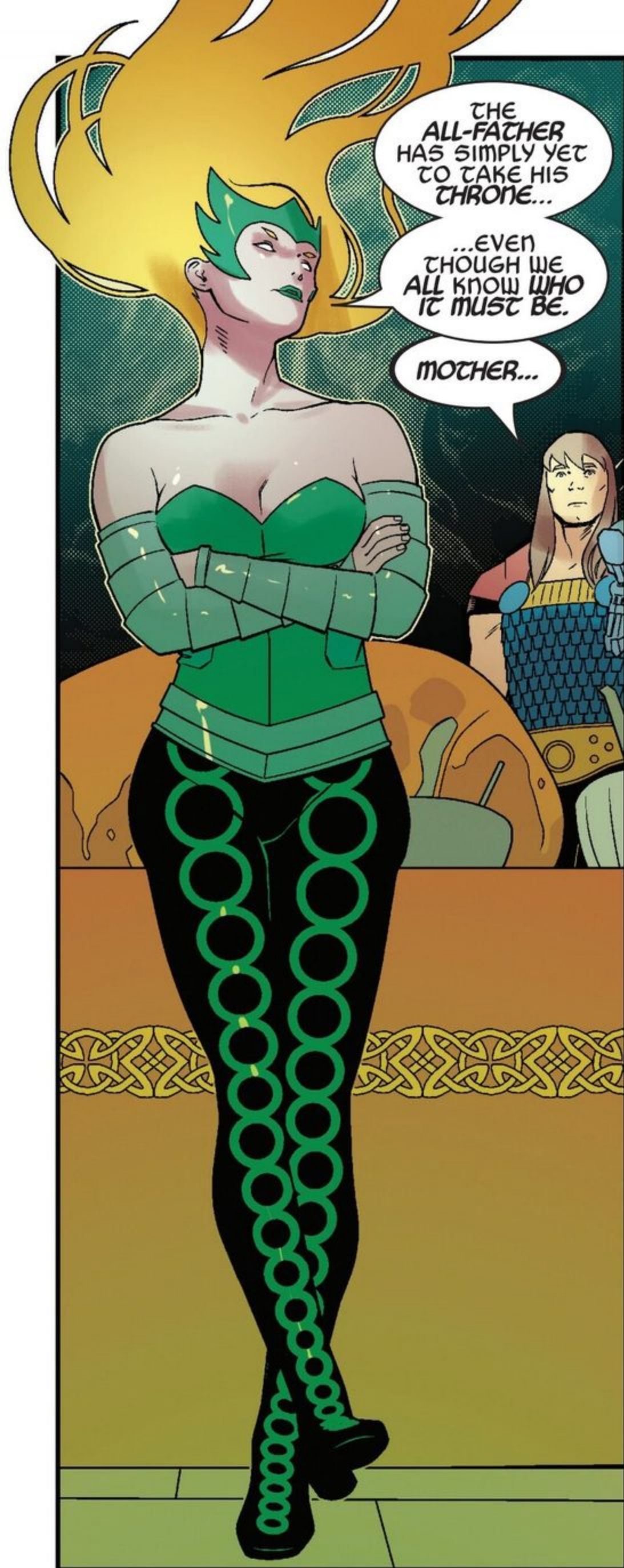


I RECALL THE WARRIORS FOUR AS **LEGENDARY HEROES** OF ASGARD.

NOT AS A... "WACKY **FOURSOME**"...

THEY ARE **JESTING** WITH YOU, **YOUNG MAGNI.**





THE ALL-FATHER HAS SIMPLY YET TO TAKE HIS THRONE...

...EVEN THOUGH WE ALL KNOW WHO IT MUST BE.

MOTHER...



AND THOUGH WE ALL HAVE PATIENCE FOR GRIEF, THE TIME OF MOURNING CANNOT LAST FOREVER.

EVENTUALLY, EVEN A WAYWARD PRINCE MUST CLAIM HIS BIRTHRIGHT...

AMORA, PLEASE.



DO NOT RUSH THE BOY--

RUSH ME TO WHAT? DO YOU AGREE WITH HER, BALDER?

DO YOU THINK A TIME-TOSSED VISITOR FROM AN ASGARD THAT NEVER WAS OR WILL BE SHOULD NOW RULE YOU ALL?



WELL, YOU ARE THE SON OF THOR, LAD...

THE SON OF A THOR--WHO CEASED TO BE LONG BEFORE THE ONE YOU ALL KNEW.

BALDER IS CLOSER KIN TO THOR THAN I AM-- WHY IS HE NOT SEATED AT THE HEAD OF THIS TABLE?



BECAUSE I HAVE SAT THERE IN TIMES PAST-- WITH MIXED RESULTS.

AND BECAUSE I STILL KEEP ONE FOOT IN ASGARD AND ONE IN HEL--WHERE, IF CERTAIN RUMORS PROVE TRUE, I MAY SOON BE NEEDED.

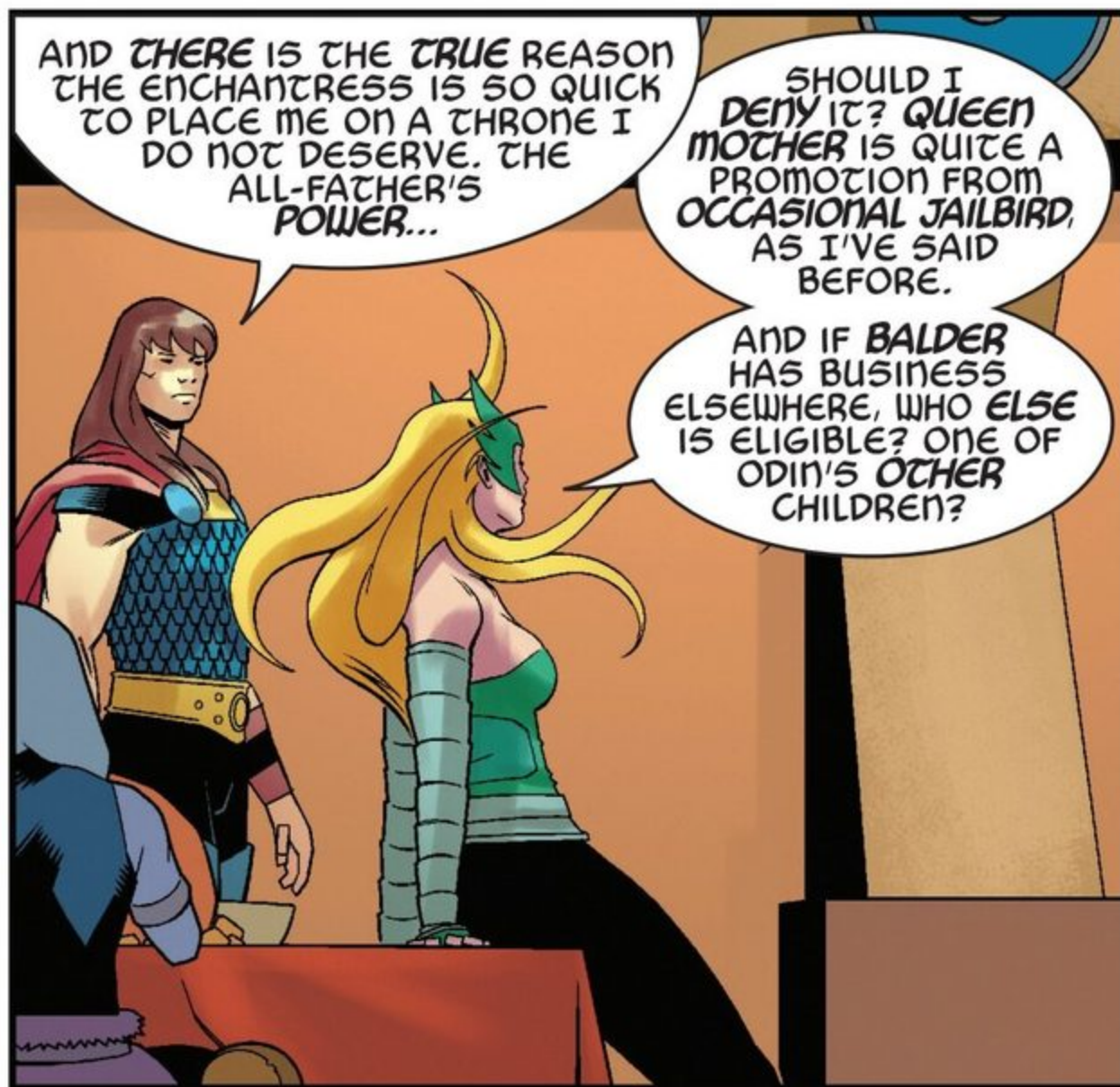
OH? IS THERE TROUBLE BREWING IN HELA'S REALM?



SHE WAS NOT AT THE FUNERAL, NOR HAS SHE SENT WORD SINCE. AND SHE IS NOT THE ONLY ONE UNACCOUNTED FOR.

WE REQUIRE A CENSUS OF REALMS, TO KNOW FOR SURE WHICH ASGARDIANS ARE WHERE...

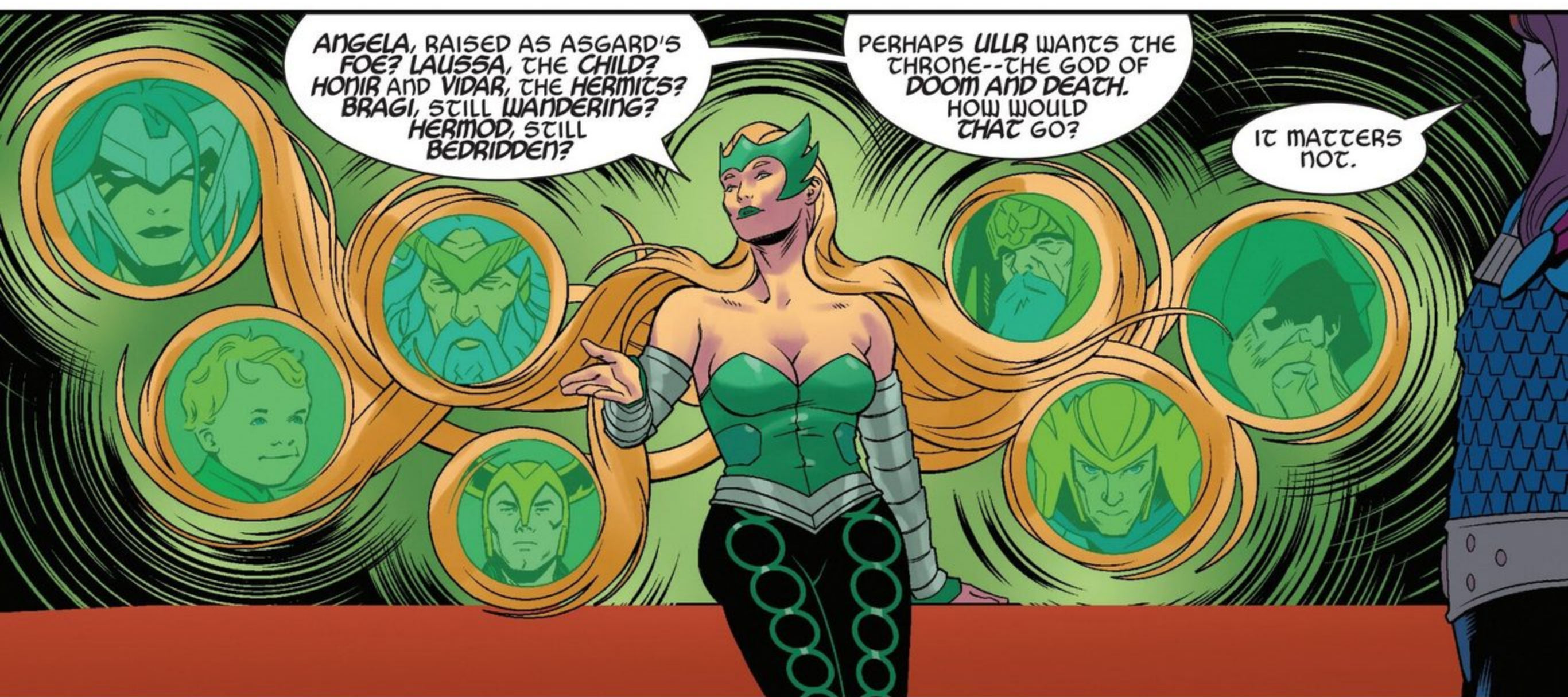
...AND ONLY AN ALL-FATHER'S POWER COULD COMMISSION ONE.



AND THERE IS THE TRUE REASON THE ENCHANTRESS IS SO QUICK TO PLACE ME ON A THRONE I DO NOT DESERVE. THE ALL-FATHER'S POWER...

SHOULD I DENY IT? QUEEN MOTHER IS QUITE A PROMOTION FROM OCCASIONAL JAILBIRD, AS I'VE SAID BEFORE.

AND IF BALDER HAS BUSINESS ELSEWHERE, WHO ELSE IS ELIGIBLE? ONE OF ODIN'S OTHER CHILDREN?



ANGELA, RAISED AS ASGARD'S FOE? LAUSSA, THE CHILD? HONIR AND VIDAR, THE HERMITS? BRAGI, STILL WANDERING? HERMOD, STILL BEDRIDDEN?

PERHAPS ULLR WANTS THE THRONE--THE GOD OF DOOM AND DEATH. HOW WOULD THAT GO?

IT MATTERS NOT.



WHATEVER POWER COMES WITH THE THRONE--THE THRONE FIRST COMES WITH THE POWER. THE ALL-POWER, PASSED FROM PARENT TO CHILD.

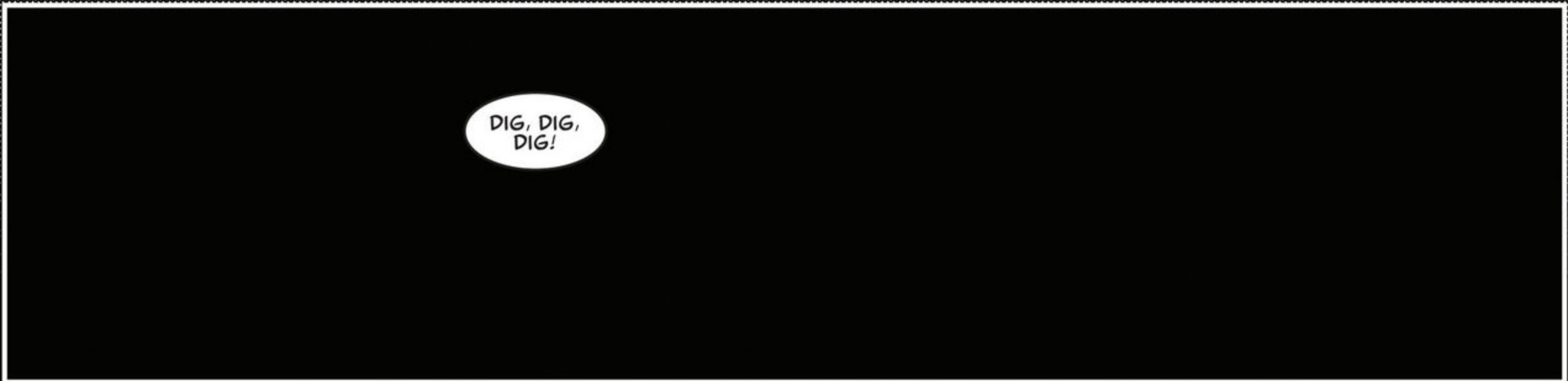
AND IF WE NEEDED A SIGN THAT I AM NOT THE SON OF THOR, WE HAVE IT NOW...

...FOR THAT POWER HAS NOT PASSED TO ME.



YES.

YES, THAT'S A PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED...





IT GOES TO **SHOW**--EVEN THE **LITTLEST** ROCK TROLL MAY SERVE THE UNDERLANDS **WELL**. FOR YOU'RE ALSO THE **SNEAKIEST** OF US ALL...

...SO OUT WITH IT, MY SPY! TELL ME **TRUE**--WHAT'VE YOU HEARD FROM THE OVER-REALM?

HOW STANDS THE THRONE OF ASGARD?



HEEE! EMPTY, LORD ULIK! **THOR'S BOY** DON'T WANT IT--

--AND HE HASN'T THE **ALL-POWER** TO GET IT IF HE DID!

ASGARD IS A REALM **WITHOUT A KING**--

AH-AH-AH. TELL ME **TRUE**, I SAID.



AND **THAT**, PEBBLEDASH, IS A **LIE**. FOR ARE OUR CAVES **BELOW** NOT AS MUCH ASGARD AS THE **SUNLIT** LAND **ABOVE**?

ARE THE **ROCK TROLLS** NOT **ALSO** OF ASGARD? AND YOU HAVE A KING, DON'T YOU?

SO TELL ME--**WHO IS** **RIGHTFUL KING** OF ASGARD?



OOOH! **ULIK!**

ULIK IS!

ULIK! ULIK!

ULIK!



AND I AM **JUST AS GOOD** AS ANY **THOR**.

ALL I NEED DO IS MAKE THEM **BELIEVE** IT...

Which Ulik the Troll had done before.

The Gods are creatures of story. A gap in that story--an empty throne, a filled grave--can be exploited by those who know their skald-magics.

So, during a previous voyage of Thor through the lands of death, the Norn Queen wove a spell about Ulik, to bestow Thor's role upon him.

Tanarus was he called, to be close to the whispered name of the Elder God who was fate and the storm in the Primal Time.

And for a brief while, he was the Thunder God of the Aesir--and none but the Loki of those days knew otherwise.

But then Thor came back.

BEHOLD THE IMPOSTOR.

AND IF ROXXON HADN'T HAD A USE FOR A DEAD TROLL, I'D BE A SKULL STILL.

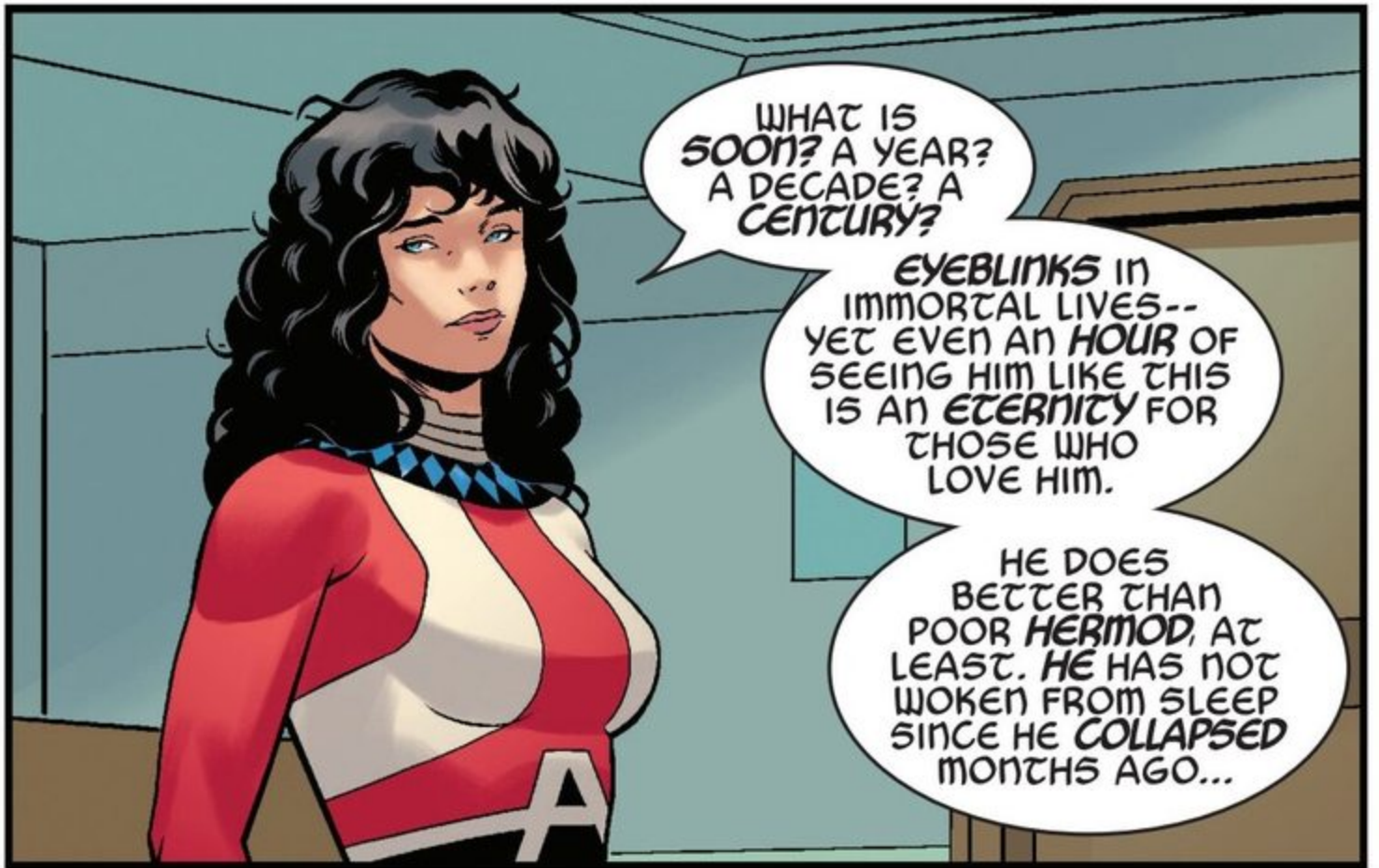
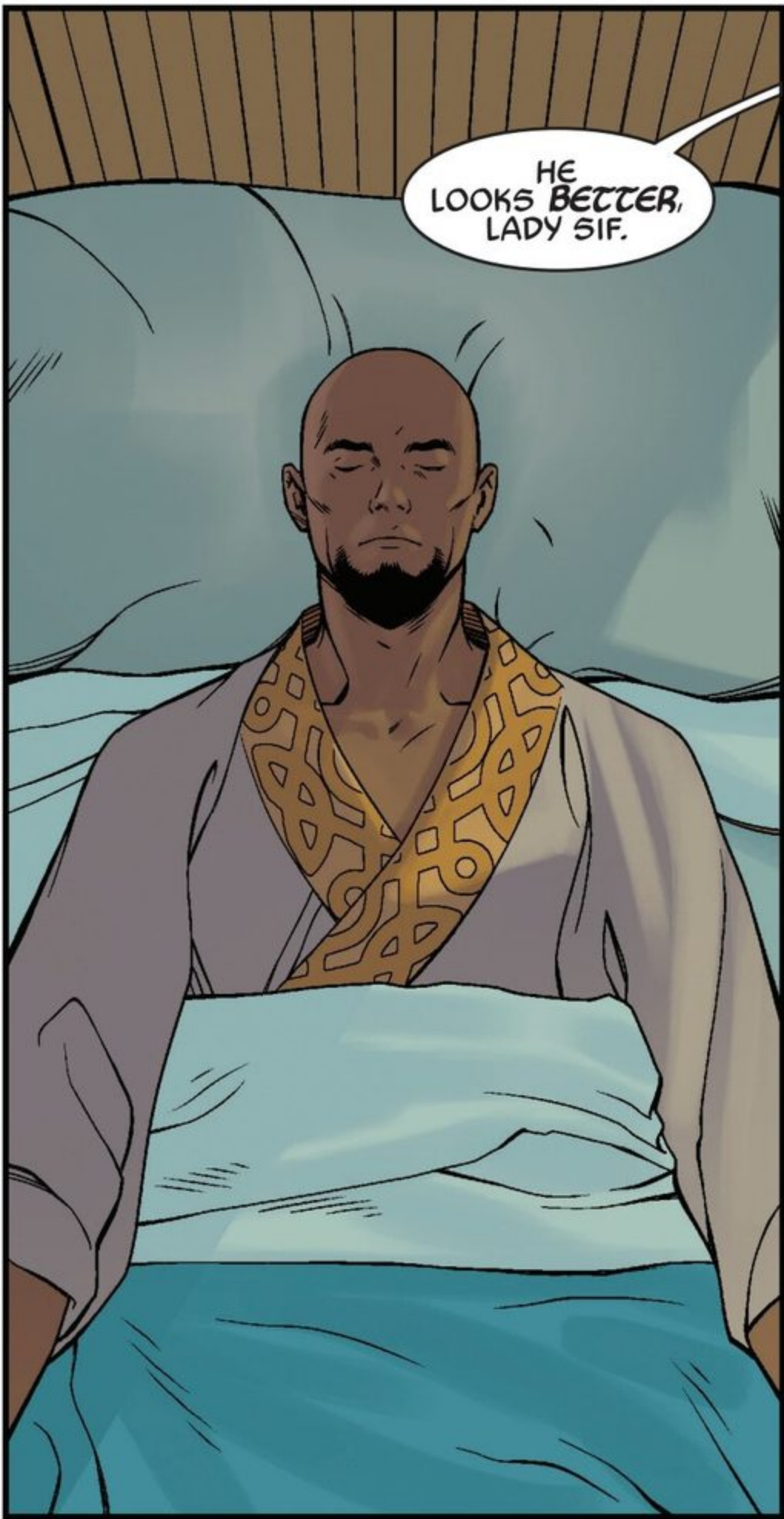
BUT THAT WAS UNDER THE LAST KING--THE OLD FOOL GEIRRODUR. NOW I AM RULER OF THE ROCK TROLLS OF ASGARD.

IF I CAN TAKE THE AESIR'S THRONE, I CAN UNITE OUR SIDES OF THE REALM--BY THEIR OWN LAW--AND RULE BOTH.

ALL WE NEED IS A MAGICIAN OF QUALITY TO WEAVE THE SPELL AND MAKE ME TANARUS AGAIN...

WILL I DO?







THOSE ARE COMPLEX QUESTIONS. I HAVE A *SIMPLER* ONE.

WHAT WOULD YOUR CHOICE BE?

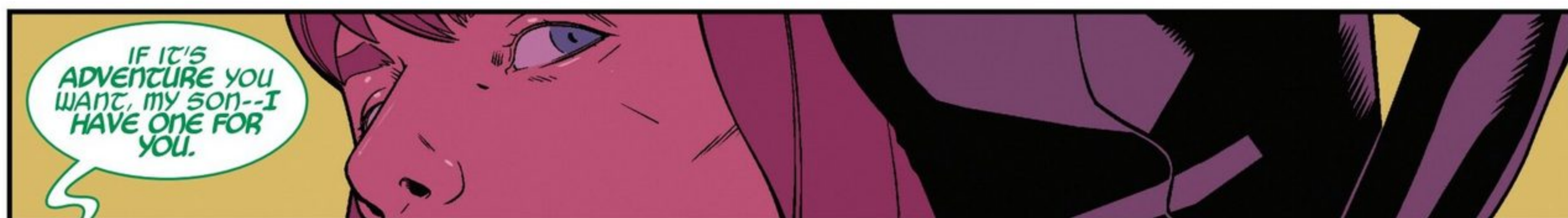
...



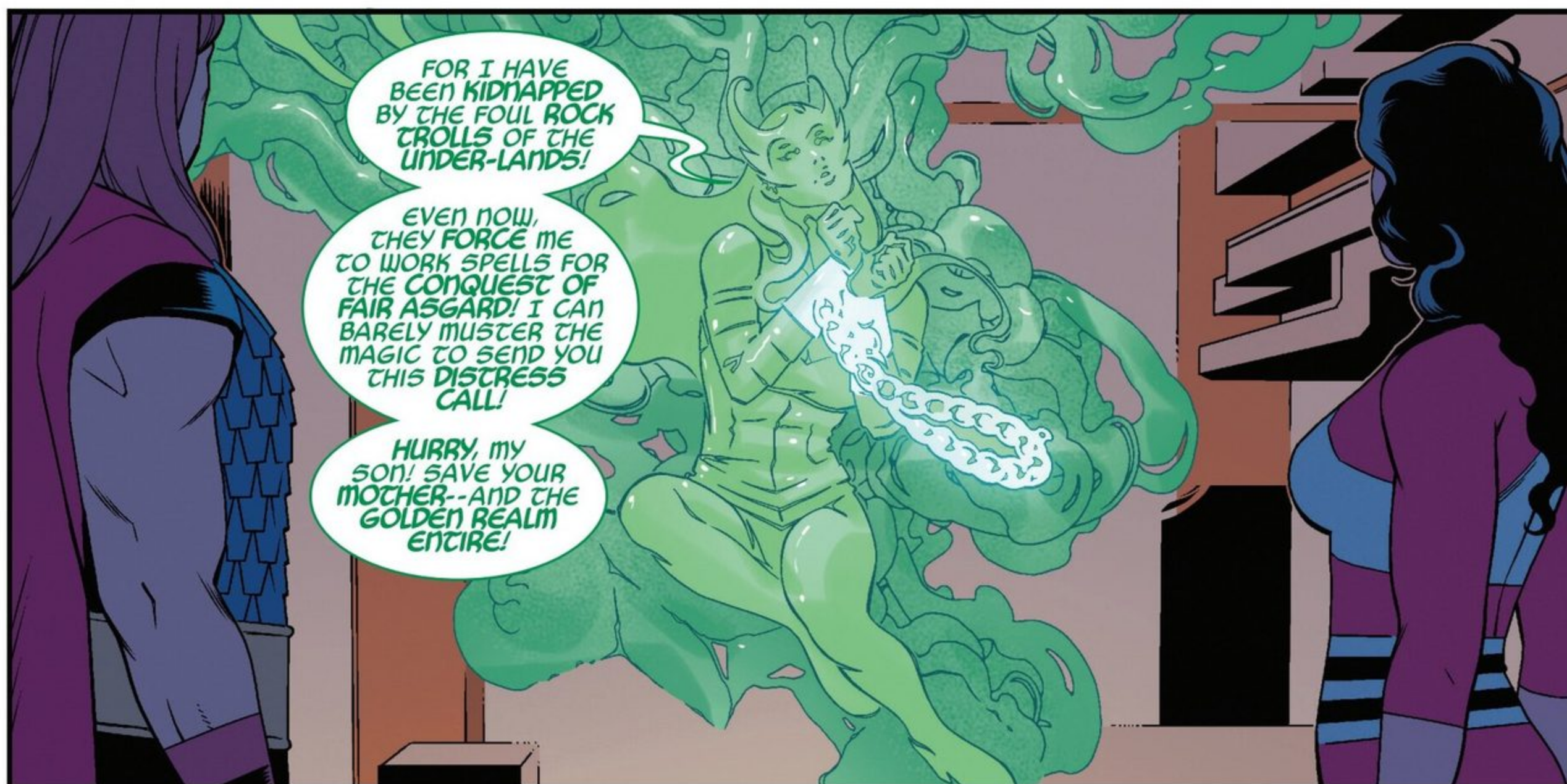
TO RIGHT ~~WRONGS~~. TO BRING ~~KINDNESS~~. NOT FROM A THRONE IN *ONE* REALM, BUT ON A JOURNEY THROUGH THEM ALL.

TO ADVENTURE-- IN THE COMPANY OF A FRIEND AS OUT OF PLACE AS I AM.

AMEN TO THAT, BUD.



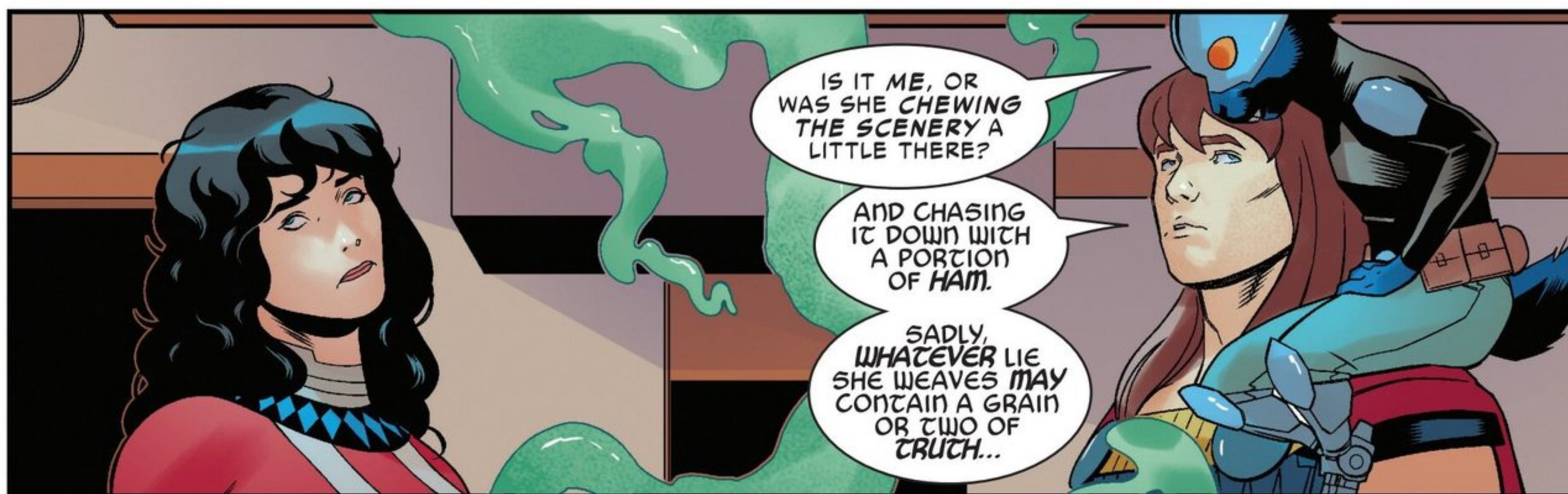
IF IT'S ADVENTURE YOU WANT, my son--I HAVE ONE FOR YOU.



FOR I HAVE BEEN KIDNAPPED BY THE FOUL ROCK TROLLS OF THE UNDER-LANDS!

EVEN NOW, THEY FORCE ME TO WORK SPELLS FOR THE CONQUEST OF FAIR ASGARD! I CAN BARELY MUSTER THE MAGIC TO SEND YOU THIS DISTRESS CALL!

HURRY, my son! SAVE YOUR MOTHER--AND THE GOLDEN REALM ENTIRE!



IS IT ME, OR WAS SHE CHEWING THE SCENERY A LITTLE THERE?

AND CHASING IT DOWN WITH A PORTION OF HAM.

SADLY, WHATEVER LIE SHE WEAVES MAY CONTAIN A GRAIN OR TWO OF TRUTH...



"...SO WE SHOULD INVESTIGATE FOR OURSELVES."

SO THERE'S A WHOLE SOCIETY OF THESE TROLL GUYS LIVING RIGHT UNDER ASGARD? HOW DOES THAT WORK?

FROM WHAT I REMEMBER, IT DOESN'T.



THE ASGARDIANS LOOK DOWN ON THE TROLLS, THE TROLLS RESENT THE ASGARDIANS... SO IT HAS BEEN SINCE THE REIGN OF BOR, AT LEAST.

A SIMMERING VICIOUS CIRCLE THAT OCCASIONALLY ERUPTS...



...INTO VIOLENCE!

GET 'EM!

BASH THEIR BRAINS!

I WANT THE LITTLE ONE!



A TASTY MOUTHFUL FOR A HUNGRY TROLL!

HOSPITABLE BUNCH! I SHOULD'A BROUGHT A GIFT!

OH, WAIT--



GLAK!

--I DID!
SNACK ON THIS, PALLY!







HOW
INDEED?

THE PAIN
ALONE SHOULD
BE ENOUGH TO
KILL ME. IT SHOULD
ALREADY HAVE
KILLED ME--YET
I LIVE.



AND THROUGH
MORE THAN
STUBBORNNESS.
MORE THAN
HEROIC WILL.

I SIMPLY
DO NOT **BELIEVE**
THE PAIN.



THOUGH ALL
my **SENSES** TELL
ME THAT I AM BEING
DESTROYED BY THE
ALL-POWER OF THE
ALL-FATHER...

...IN THE
CORE OF
my VERY BEING,
I KNOW IT
CANNOT BE.

BECAUSE
THERE IS ONLY
ONE ALL-POWER...
AND THE **TRUE**
ALL-POWER...







CLAP CLAP CLAP

BRAVO.



I SEE THAT
"MAGNI" IS SHORT FOR
"MAGNANIMOUS"...

I ONLY DO
AS THE *THOR*
OF THIS WORLD
WOULD HAVE
DONE IN MY
PLACE.

WAS
THAT *NOT*
PART OF YOUR
GRAND PLAN,
MOTHER?



YOU DO
SEEM IN
BETTER SPIRITS
THAN WHEN YOU
ASKED FOR
MY AID...

YOU--YOU
SIGNALLED HIM!
YOU BROUGHT
HIM HERE!

I WARNED YOU OF
THE CONSEQUENCES
FOR BETRAYAL,
ENCHANTRESS--



GAHH!

GET
OFF, WRETCHED
RABBIT!

I'M A RABBIT
WHO KNOWS,
PAL--SO TAKE
IT FROM ME.



SOMETIMES
YOU GOTTA QUIT
WHILE YOU'RE
AHEAD.

HRMPH.





And at the head of the table sat Ulik--not as All-Father of Asgard, but as the Golden Realm's guest.

It took some getting used to. But the Aesir had learned to smile again--and with Magni's warmth and encouragement, they shared those smiles with their oldest foes.

But the slyest smile belonged to Amora, the Enchantress...

...as she made her plans for the murder to come.

A MERRY TALE OF ASGARD

AL EWING
WRITER

JUANN CABAL
ARTIST

MATTIA IACONO
COLOR ARTIST

VC's JOE SABINO
LETTERER

ALEX ROSS
COVER ARTIST

PASQUAL FERRY & MATT HOLLINGSWORTH; MIRKA ANDOLFO;
WALTER SIMONSON & LAURA MARTIN; INHYUK LEE
VARIANT COVER ARTISTS

DANNY KHAZEM ASSOCIATE EDITOR

WIL MOSS EDITOR

C.B. CEBULSKI EDITOR IN CHIEF

THOR CREATED BY STAN LEE, LARRY LIEBER & JACK KIRBY

IF THEY BE WORDY

Merry meet, Mortal-maniacs, and welcome to the first MORTAL THOR letter column! And since it's a new letter column, we need a new name, since just about anyone's worthy enough to pick up a lump hammer that Sigurd Jarlson bought in a thrift store for five bucks and therefore IF THEY BE WORDY no longer applies. Send your ideas in, and the best one will become the official title of this page, until this act of the saga comes to its end.

But for now, let's inaugurate this nameless page with some of your mail!

Mr. Ewing,

I must confess that I wasn't always a die-hard Thor fan. His stories often left me feeling indifferent. However, my perspective has changed in recent years. After witnessing the exceptional work you've done with my favorite Marvel character, the Hulk, I was eagerly anticipating how you would portray Thor. You didn't disappoint—IMMORTAL THOR was an unexpected and thrilling journey. Now, with MORTAL THOR, you've taken the story in a direction I never anticipated.

This is certainly not the Thor I'm accustomed to. He's far more brutal than I could have ever imagined. I'm eagerly curious to see how this journey ultimately leads to his restoration as a god. My only genuine concern is with Loki. I've thoroughly enjoyed observing their transformation from the mischievous god of mischief to the more noble god of stories. After witnessing them kill Thor and then playfully toy with Sigurd, I fear we might be headed back to the old version of Loki, undoing the progress they've made.

That said, I eagerly anticipate Sigurd's interactions with the world and, eventually, with the heroes who have forgotten Thor.

Thank you for the entertainment,
Jose Marrero

Thank you, Jose, your kind words mean a lot. Regarding Loki, I can state for the record that I never want to go back to the past when I write them—but I also never want to stay still. I'm

looking for that third road into Fair Elfland, and if I work this one right, Loki won't be a one-note villain or a one-note hero again.

Al,

MORTAL THOR #1 was incredible. Your understanding of Thor here in Marvel and even the deeper influences from the Eddas continues to shine on the page. I've been reading Thor for pretty much my entire life, and there's something special in the way you write him that really shines through for me.

I can't wait to follow this three-act story out to its ending and see just what this god we all love so much looks like at the end of it.

Thank you,
Joe

Thanks, Joe! I'm glad Sigurd's voice resonates with you—it's been a joy to discover it and watch Pasqual Ferry bring him to life on the page.

Good day Mr. Ewing,

I normally read my comics six issues at a time, but yesterday, I had to read MORTAL THOR. I had written you previously about act one. I enjoyed it very much. Thor is a character I have loved since my grandmother bought me THOR #195 before I could read. I was always mesmerized by that hammer. I was glad to see it here.

I'm intrigued by the story and am happy to see where it goes. I'm also hoping to see some interaction with Beta Ray Bill. I'm also curious to see how the gods are doing without Thor among them, especially his "son." Looking forward to the next issue. Thank you.

Kenny Todd

Well, Kenny, now that you've seen how the Gods of Asgard are doing—what did you think? There'll be another Tale of Asgard snuck in among the next set of Sigurd's adventures, so we'll be back in the Golden Realm pretty soon for more.

To the Keepers of the Eternal Flame,
I wanted to wait until I completed the second issue of this new Thor series

before writing. As I close the book on my second read through, my mind is reeling with questions and ideas. This is definitely a bold direction for our hammer-swinging hero, and the first two issues have had me transfixed. Though our protagonist is very much human, there is still the nobility and heart that continues to make THOR my favorite Marvel mag. The fact that I could immediately hear Sigurd's voice is a testament to your amazing characterization and use of dialogue. I would be remiss to not also mention the jaw-dropping moment of seeing the bungee-cord hammer. Such a great way to have it return to Sigurd's hand. In that same moment, I also have to shout out Pasqual Ferry's homage to Jack Kirby's Thor Marvelmania poster. It brought a smile to my face to see that panel. As far as questions, I have to wonder who our narrator truly is. Is this the skald persona of Loki? If so, are they trying to circumvent Ragnarok or prepare for it? Is Blake the "Midgard Serpent" in this tale? (Yes, I did notice the painting in Kristin's apartment.) I can't wait to see what this creative team has in store for us with each new issue of the MORTAL THOR.

Sammy Maynard
Belfry, KY

Thank you, Sammy! The bungee hammer was one of the first things I thought of when I considered a completely human Thor, and I knew the book would stand or fall on the concept—thanks again, Pasqual, for making it mythic as well as action-packed. As for Blake—is he Donald or something colder and emptier now? Well, read on...

...because that's all the time we have for letters this issue, and it's time to talk about MORTAL THOR #5—in which Sigurd has to explain to the police what happened in issue #3, Loki has to explain to Odin what they're doing and Blake explains his motives to...well, that might be telling. Until then, love, strength and justice to all who need it, and until the Warriors Four have a Night at the Opera...hold your hammers high!

—Al

WE WANT YOUR LETTERS! TO SEE THEM ANSWERED BY AL EWING HIMSELF, WRITE US AT MHEROES@MARVEL.COM, AND BE SURE TO MARK THEM "OKAY TO PRINT"!

NEXT ISSUE:



ENTER THE SERPENT!

- The Sons of the Serpent want the man called Thor dead. And they have a name: Sigurd Jarlson.
- But the man called Thor has a name too...the name of their leader. And that name...is Blake.
- Somewhere in the city, a man with a hammer faces his enemy...